

**Portland Harbor Community Coalition & EPA Region 10 Meeting**

**July 23rd, 2013, 5:30 - 8:00 pm**

**Location: Groundwork Portland office – 3802 NE MLK Blvd**

**Present:** Jim Anderson (DEQ-Portland Harbor Project Manager), Peter Murchie (EPA Manager-Community Engagement & Environmental Health Unit), Sheryl Stohs (EPA- EJ Community Liaison), Alanna Connely (EPA- Community Involvement Coordinator), Chip Humphrey (EPA-Superfund Project Manager), Lauren Senkyr (NOAA-Portland Harbor Natural Resource Trustee Council Outreach Coordinator) John (b) (6) (Neighbors for Clean Air), Lisa (b) (6) (Right 2 Survive), Ibrahim (b) (6) (Right 2 Survive), Kristin Rasmussen (Office of State Representative Susan Bonamici), Ivana (b) (6) (Czech School; Impact NW), Olga (b) (6) (Czech School; Impact NW), Eric (b) (6) (East European Coalition), Donita (b) (6) (Native Youth and Elders Council/NAYA), Joan (b) (6) (volunteer), Les (b) (6) (Groundwork Portland Board Member), Chabre (b) (6) (Groundwork Portland Board Co-Chair), (b) (6) Hadi (Iraqi Society of Oregon), Cassie (b) (6) (Groundwork Portland Staff), Stephanie (b) (6) (Groundwork Portland Staff), Barbara (b) (6) (North Portland activist), Art (b) (6) (Portland American Indian Movement), JR (b) (6) (Wiconi International), Peter (b) (6) (Resident of Portland)

**Absent:** PHCC Core Partner representatives from Latino Network and APANO

**Next Steps:**

- Follow up with EPA – to receive answers/recommendations to questions
  - Identify the gaps between Duwamish EJ Analysis and Portland Harbor existing data/documents
- Ensure a PHCC rep can attend the CAG Monthly meeting and report back to PHCC.
- Determine what the EJ research questions are that PHCC would like to answer?

**(Highlights in Bold)**

**Introductions**

- **Donita:** Native American Youth and Family Center. What does it mean for us as a community moving forward to clean up a river because of past practices. We have invested interest in this process, we have dialogued about what this site means for us. Many of us have superfund sites on our homes, and what does that impact have on our tribal communities. We are committed to continuing to learn about that process. We are affiliated, we have 380 affiliated tribes. As Native people we care and infuse that cultural perspective.
- **Joan:** not core partner just community member. worked on project with people that fish at superfund site. interested in sharing message about river.
- **Jim:** Dept. Environmental Quality. EPA is lead agency providing oversight. DEQ supports EPA, DEQ for open source control.
- **Sheryl:** Environmental Justice Community Liason. Region 10 based in Seattle, EJ liason. Work with Environmental Justice (EJ) small grants administration and coordinate those efforts. Outreach to special interests .
- **Alanna:** Community Involvement coordinator with EPA. Thank you for inviting us to your place. We have a two track role: make sure comm is informed updated about

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site. There is a lot info out there in newspapers, in television, we want to make sure you have info coming from office that is correct. Make sure voices are heard and take that back and incorporate into process

- **John:** community organizing around air toxics. Air toxics do contribute to superfund site. I was an enforcement attorney for a year, know inner workings with CIRCLA trying to provide assistance at community level.
- **Lisa:** Right 2 Survive, will go out to document stories about people how river impacts lives
- **Ibrahim:** Right 2 Survive. We go to ground zero to where people sleep in bushes. Empower by teaching, educating, talk to houseless community, talk about whats going wrong. Talk to houseless people that live there about their being pushed out of the city and where they need to go.
- **Kristen:** Rep from Bonamici's office. Bonamici is very interested in issue. Here to listen to keep office updated.
- **Ivana:** Czech school of Portland. We are here to listen and share message behind river with Czech community, it is very small they go out door camp by the river. We want to do workshops, make short movie.
- **Eric:** 160,00 Russian and Ukrainian speaking people in Oregon and Vancouver, just finished needs assessment did not know that there was pollution in river. Our job is to listen. There is an issue here we would like community to be involved, this is first step to do something
- **Peter:** Interim manager for Community Engagement & Environmental Health Unit. Very excited to be here. Learn more about Portland Harbor project to learn more about your concerns and projects. I'm from Portland, lived here for 10 years. lived in SE.
- **Les:** Portland Native, citizen, community activist, here to learn more.
- **Hadi:** Iraq Society. Came here to participate, we are planning to encourage our members, the Iraqi people that live here that live in portland to participate and force to make environmental change.
- **Cassie:** GWX PDX was initiator of meetings, we are stepping back trying to be part of coalition try and share facilitation. Each partner has determined their scope of work.
- **Barbara:** citizen activists, have been going to general superfund meetings for past 5 years. main concern to CAG (Community Advisory Group) members is to give voice to N. Portland neighborhood. Mainly Cathedral Park, very concerned that community came out against Contained Disposal Facility, ongoing concern that I have as part of this process
- **Lauren:** Natural Resource Trustee Council. 5 tribes 3 natl resource agency's. Work on restoration of recreational uses, etc. that is what we are working on here to hear what community needs are.
- **Art:** I am Nez Perce and Cayuse. Part of American Indian Movement. Let people know we are spiritual movement, not about moving land or digging holes. We are about prayer and ceremony, solution to many things as well as the people involved and the water itself. Our concern is that everything is being contaminated everywhere. Intend to have ceremonies every year. hard to know what is going on out here sometimes because you cant document it. It's more of a spiritual thing. no one wants to be injured by whats in the water.
- **JR:** Navajo nation here as a core partner rep with Wiconi international. There are lots of goals and why we are involved I was raised with Hijon (Not sure what the correct spelling of this is), the beauty way our relationship with the earth the water the river

needs to be in balance. We at Wiconi see that things are not in balance. Speak for the river, on behalf of the mother earth. Invite others in their own way to participate as well.

- **Chabre:** I work with Cassie as one of the board chairs.
- **Peter:** resident of Portland.

### **PHCC Messaging (Preliminary Priorities) and Discussion**

- PHCC members read through their drafted priorities, then added additional thoughts.
- Jr: if I can add to **7th generation**, we're not just looking at right now it's looking ahead and seeing what we can provide. 7th generation model is looking 3 generations into the past, looking at the present, 3 generations into the future. Native people have been here for thousands of years. Maybe in history people have done us wrong, allowed for pollutions to exist. So how do we bring that back into balance. So as Native people, Donita and Art, and other people that aren't here that is what we are concerned about cleaning up the river.
- Donita: I'll share an anecdotal story. We have a group of elders that are developing project for urban community **canoe journeys** which is sacred to NW Native tribes and across the nation. We have been on river down at Champoege park, 110 mile journey, they landed at Cathedral park last night. as Native people having people in the water day and night for ceremony and prayer. We are impacted in a very real way by being in that water. As people we were meeting up on the Washougal and touching it they noticed a pool of coal residue.
  - We want to encourage **youth to study environmental sciences**. I wanted to share those experiences of our elders are thinking about this, not at a point that its too late but what is our deepest level of commitment working with EPA and local industry and politicians and policy makers embracing that opportunity now.
- John: I was disappointed that focus was on fugitive emissions. I think that when you're talking about projects like this confined disposal facilities etc. what you are going to be worried about is the type of vehicles that are going to be used, for dredging, transportation. A lot of largest **air pollution** problem is diesel particulates, swamps out a lot of other cancer risks. Really important when we talk about cleaning up we don't make the same mistakes again, make sure that when we clean it is really clean.
- Barbara: would like to add that several people are very worried about **PCB's going airborne**. We have asked for **air quality monitoring** during dredging process to ensure what is going airborne, to ensure N/ NW Portland not putting at risk to airborne pollutants.
- Eric: fascinating group, we have a room full of experts that know a lot of things. East European community doesn't know that much about river. There are a lot of **Russians and Ukrainians that go down to the river and fish**, I have uncle that goes down and doesn't know, they do not know anything about the pollution, they don't know anything. That is where our community is at right now, basic stuff right now, we're at the point where "hey guys that's polluted" if we could get that **translated into Russian** and get it to our Community that would be something to help out.
- Ibrahim: We all know that **houselessness** is not peoples faults, its the government not looking after their people. not enough jobs, not enough housing. People embarrassed to use social services. People go hide out under the bridge also people are being herded out of the city limits like cattle so they are not seen. They live out **on the**



**waterfront**, grow vegetables and use the water, and this is their way of life and they get told you cant live in the city, where are they going to live? When we tell them that this is toxic, that what they use is toxic and use as a means of survival and they are doing it in a toxic area. The air is toxic, the vegetation is toxic and they are eating the vegetation. I am not saying that our problem is worse than anyone else's everyone uses the water that is toxic.

- Hadi: I have info about environment and pollution. I read that government has plans since 1990 but it is just on paper and as you know the 1,200 miles. On this river I read that 15 paper mills all of them pour their waste into the river all of these made even mercury and heat and they discover in the fish themselves the fish contain lead and mercury and it is very dangerous. We should be more serious to **find a solution to make river clean**.
- Lisa: I have question that maybe EPA can answer. When we do the cleanup, **how many years down the road do we expect that the river banks, fish and water can be used or sustained?**
- Chip: There have been technical models, what we look at is experience at other sites. What we hear about clean up is that it makes sites worse for a bit. So you see for a year or two where its actually worse, projects across country with dredging techniques the long term trajectory is a decade's time, with some areas getting better but not to the level we would like to see, but to get down to the level that is without restriction is **probably a couple of decades**.
- John: what causes the lag in recovery?
- Chip: There are limits to what we can do with the cleanup to take the peak off of contamination once you start to get into more lower levels of the river sediment.
- Barbara: What is being proposed are two large **toxic waste dumps** that will hold all sediment from cleanup. Silver valley re-contamination event. Both of the toxic waste dumps are in flood sites. What learnings do you have from silver valley or alternatives? What we have is proposal from lower Willamette groups that was selected for interim action. We need to go through process of are we going to do that. We are looking at other cdfs. How are we going to address other types of contamination.
- **Stephanie**: I wanted to share some words questions that Core partners had, who could not be here:

**Jackeline from Latino Network:**

- How is the EPA going to ensure that when the river starts to get cleaned, **minorities are considered** (taken into account)?
- If there are already policies that support this, how will they ensure that this is carried out while the river is being cleaned? Perhaps **naming a committee** to oversee and follow this process so the EPA can work side by side with Latino/a organizations and minority organizations.

**Nou from APANO:**

- Have you [EPA] looked for alternative ways to detoxify the PCB, Pahs, Dioxins, and pesticides beside natural restoration and dredging?
- Have you [EPA] considered using microorganisms such as Dehalococcoids (Dhc[bacteria]) to clean the river, since the bacteria replaces the chlorine atom in Aroclor 1260 (pCB) with hydrogen?
- What are the plans so far as to helping us to help get the river clean?

- Sheryl requested that we **send specific questions to EPA.**
- Chip: EPA has to decide whether alternative cleanup methods will be part of the process, and that will largely be weighed based on whether there is evidence proving that the alternative methods work.
- Barbara: We are talking about DDT's, PCB's, 4 or 5 dioxins, agent orange--some of the most toxic stuff you can think of which in a flood zone may or may not go airborne. My concern as a community member, we as a community members have said **we do not want the container (Combined Disposal Facility-CDF).** They are supposed to **last ten years.** that is not 7th generation. We think 7th generation is a very good idea.
- Chip: Some materials would go in the CDF, and some would not be warranted as safe to go in. Material from the Gasco site, for instance, would not be appropriate to go in the proposed CDF. There were some models to run for the proposed Terminal 4 CDF.
- Eric: Can you dumb this down to me? One proposal is set to put it over here and there are sediments that have been tested to put over here and others that would not be put over here?
- Barbara: So nothing has been agreed upon yet?
- Eric: **Public perception** is that it has been. So how are we going to deal with the **perception that this CDF is being fast tracked,** that this is going to happen and that we are going to get screwed?
- Chip: How do we let people know? Maybe that is a credibility process.
- Chabre: Maybe that gets answered in the process you (Peter) were talking about.
- Peter: Right, so maybe we get into the process and answer questions...etc

### **Process--Portland Harbor Superfund Cleanup & Discussion**

- Chip: Let me give the very short version; we have an agreement with the responsible parties that we think had a hand in contamination of river. We have an agreement with people to do that investigation, our job is to oversee that investigation. Now we're are at a point where parties has provided range of options...Look at all options that have been presented and see what do we think is the best way to approach river cleanup. On a lot of sites that's a 30 day comment period on a site like this its going to be an extensive public comment period and then we look at whether that will change the options and process we were presented. Go to record of decision.
- Eric: What if responsible parties say no?
- Chip: We have pretty good authority, we have a "pretty big stick". We used to have a pot of money that we could take and use to clean up the sites, and charge the PRP's three times the amount it took for us to clean.
- Chip: We have considered alternative treatment technologies and members of CAG have brought in people to present . If the community has options for alternative treatment then we can look at that.
- Cassie: that seems like a very heavy burden for us. We don't know where to look for the **cutting edge technology** beyond what local experts have presented. Are there new things on the horizon, that we can look at?
- Chabre: So I think that is what the beauty of this group is, that we can tell you this is what is important to us, and with your vast knowledge you can say this is what is important and this is what will work. Making sure we do our job and you can do your job to make our voice heard.

- Chip: We just went through somewhat of a **battle with PRPs over whether people are eating the contaminated fish and whether there are good numbers. The more evidence that we see on eating the resident fish helps us when we are negotiating those things with the PRP's.**
- Eric: if you give me a second I can give you a number. [Eric pulls out 'Needs Assessment' done on the Slavic Community in Oregon, Portland Metro Area]
- Peter (b) (6) Is there a way that we could somehow get a better picture of how successful EPA has been in getting best solutions in place? I'm sure that **process has been undermined. How can we make sure that doesn't happen here?**
- Alanna: I heard three specific areas, that we may be able to help in. I know Eric you were talking about knowing **how many people, and knowing the frequency with which people eat fish.** We are really interested in knowing and if we are working on some of the tools that we have to outreach to the community. We did have a meeting with Latino network that did have a translator. Where we can have documents that we are putting out translated.
- What we are working out is getting a card that gets right to the point; where the site is, the fish, where you can get more information, translated into Spanish, Russian Chinese and Vietnamese. We want to hear about what other languages to translate into. The other thing we heard is about homeless community. We know that telling people not to use water etc. is not going to work. **To increase awareness in the community of safety concerns, this is an opportunity where you can work together with the EPA and Oregon health authority.**
- Cassie: I have a question about if the group is not able to get the full breadth of surveys to show the full numbers of people fishing, then what could happen if you don't get more information? There have already been disputes with the PRPss, so **what could be the risk?**
- Chip: We have finalized human consumption risk, we had to dictate to PRPs, and there was not full agreement. Those kinds of things can be challenged. The remedy that that is based on can be challenged. anything to justify those kinds of rates, would be helpful to us.
- Cassie: what other **grants or funding sources** could help facilitate the kind of research you are describing that should be done?
- Alanna: We can continue to send forth grant funding that comes from EPA or USDA or other natural resources that might help support your work.
- Sheryl: there is starting a new season of federal grants, EPA just had a webinar, I do believe that it was taped. I can send that to you. Grants specify what kinds of actions you should take. NIH etc. a lot of solicitation will come out October/ December that will be out. There is EJ small grant which we are expecting solicitation to come out in October. It's not enough to do large scale research, but a help to community.
- Let's consider what can we do in the interim, before that cleanup takes place, looking at those resources and those funding streams to be able to find solutions or work with how do you educate communities.
- Alanna: There are **grant writing trainings.**
- Cassie: People doing the grant writing so far are Groundwork Portland volunteers and me. Sheritta at the national EPA office said their might be a larger grant that would be offered \$100,000.
- Sheryl: Yes, that is being considered.
- Joan: With new research on health risks when people eat fish off of the river, is the



presentation, we can present.

- Once a month there are **Community Advisory Group** meetings and during those meetings there is some very good info shared with the community. It would be good if at least one person from PHCC that can attend.
- Cassie: And we have had at least one CAG liason comig to PHCC meetings every month. Maybe we can segway into the EJ analysis and the Duwamish..

### **Environmental Justice (EJ) Analysis**

- Peter: so a couple of things; EPA is committed especially with Portland Harbor around engaging a diverse community. **EJ is a priority of the EPA agency and EPA region 10** for working with communities. My understanding is that our projects kind of have built into them a health risk assessment, have built into them some of those factors and I believe that to be the case here in this instance and we want to continue to do that and the more we understand about the community needs and organizations around many of these values. **A lot of the work that was done as part of the Duwamish EJ analysis is work that has or is being done on Portland harbor issues, I think also looking at Duwamish since there are some similarities and how do we best work with you and how we continue to do that?**
- Sheryl: let me set the stage. With the EJ analysis, there are various levels. You need to start off with what questions is the community is looking for. For example, **subsistence levels, the Human health assessment had also looked at that as well for Portland Harbor**; there were commonalities between the Duwamish EJ Analysis and Portland Harbor Human Health Assessment.
- The Duwamish River Coalition did form a lot of partners (including academic ones) that did get grants that allowed them to get more information on the river. Where the Duwamish is, there are communities that actually live on the Duwamish. Looked at characteristics that are actually there. That is what we are trying to hear from Portland.
- **What are the EJ questions that you are trying to answer?**
  - There are a lot of data, GIS mapping, Geo mapping looking at census data and then looking a the behaviors of the community and looking at the contamination, what are parameters of looking at EJ analysis.
  - What are the missing elements for community that you would want to have answered or an analysis of some kind would provide for you. **What are key kinds of things that are related to health that you are interested in?**
- Eric: It is a problem if you are using census data, in that Russians nor houseless people are captured.
- Sheryl: your right. But the census is not all we use. We also use the ACS.
- Eric: The ACS still doesn't capture these populations.
- Sheryl: You are right. Some of the things you can start doing is interview people on the river.
- Cassie: There is more to it. It's a non geographic EJ issue here, as compared to the Duwamish superfund. The affected communities often transport themselves to the river. We do feel the need to capture those voices, how do we do that in a way that can be recognized?
- Sheryl: the census data is not the only the hardcore data that is good. One of the

number going to be skewed now that health risk research was already done? Is there a formula you are using that take into account that?

- Chip: You can factor a margin of error and add number adjustments.
- Peter: Sorry, just to clarify, are you saying that your **concern is the number of people that consume will go down?**
- Joan: Yes
- Chip: We are trying to find **what would the rate of fish consumption be without pollution.** We don't view that as the long term solution. That is not where we are going.
- Peter: We want to know what the **natural consumption rates** would be, that is the natural consumption we would want to make when river is clean. The idea is we would want them to eat as much as culturally possible.
- Chip: We have been criticized for our consumption rates for Oregon, to be protective of people who eat a lot of fish. We get **push back from PRPs** who will have to clean up.
- (b) (6) So you have absolute power? or does the community have to do something to call b.s. on the study?
- Lisa: Is there any plan for **healthy re-introduction for native fish or plants** around areas that we are planning to disrupt more?
- Chip: Not from EPA's perspective. The **Natural Resource Trustee Council is looking at restoring wildlife.** That's not part of our work, we are there to ensure that chemically the river is safe.
- Lauren: To answer your question Lisa, that is part of the bigger picture, and the big plan. This is part of what the responsible parties will have to pay for.
- Cassie: That gets at what will also be the **community's role in restoration either through jobs, jobs training or volunteering**
- Lisa: I had one other question: Certain chemicals go to some sites, **what happens when chemicals can't go to certain sites?**
- Chip: **capping** material, don't dredge it all so therefore you don't need to dispose, simply capping areas.
- Lisa: How far away are these sites?
- Chip: **Arlington, the Dalles, Hillsboro.** It depends on the certain type of toxicity.
- Ibrahim: We skimmed through the question that Eric asked-- **what happens if containers leak?** Is it feasible to put that near populated areas?
- Chip: For landfills that are offsite, they have liners, groundwater monitors. For CDF's there would be some leakage, so you control what kind of material would go in there.
- Peter: This is the difficult part because the toxics don't go away.
- JR: We have our projects that we are going to be working on in the next coming weeks. **Do we need to encourage them to learn about them? How can our supporters take more action, writing our congressman? going to rallies?**
- Alanna: Are your partners fully aware of what is going on? **If there is some info that they need to know to better inform that would be helpful.** If they decide to write a letter to congressman, that would be helpful. If you are doing children's workshops, we can help.
  - Are your members fully aware of Portland harbor, the steps and what happens next?"
  - Another way is if there are some gaps let us know so we can help out with that, resources or materials, that you can cut and paste [to use]. Cassie mentioned a



things EPA has begun to do is pull other information from other areas that face similar issues. Work in partnerships because the government can't do it all.

- Donita: That is really our 7th generation philosophy, so that each generation is carrying that forward. so we are creating and sustaining positive impact.
- Peter: There are some things that have been brought today that we can answer. Lets think about **the right way we can keep this conversation moving forward.**
  - We can help translate your **value structure**, into information that gets at data, cleanup alternatives, translation, and presentations. etc. we can help you in grant writing skills.
  - We don't have pots of money for some of these things that you are talking about, some of these gaps in information we have more of an opportunity to look at our budgets and planning to help you, to more clearly define the more specific needs that you have.
  - Barbara: **Portland Harbor Community Advisory group voted to support the PHCC in having an EJ analysis done.** We feel that it is needed, and that there was a **precedent set with the Duwamish cleanup EJ Analysis.** I want to know **how that was funded?**
  - Peter: I think there were a lot of things that were done in the Duwamish report that are being done with the Portland harbor.
    - We are still looking at what was done with that as well as for Duwamish and other superfund sites.
    - The EPA has a **plan EJ 2014**, on how we should develop EJ into future plans.
    - We don't have the budget to do an EJ analysis but and we can talk more specifically about components that were done on the Duwamish. We are doing a lot of those things in this process. But one question is how can we do them better?
- Sheryl: one of the things too that Peter is talking about, the study some of the information that is done particularly on the diverse communities on the river and that makes it difficult when you are looking at **quantitative data.**
  - The community has specific questions, to look at, it helps EPA to know what specific questions you have, there may be things that the EJ analysis may not answer.
  - What are those specific questions? Is there a way that the values (the messaging that we shared during the meeting) can be translated into question that can be made into specific resources to provide help?

Examples for questions:

- **How much people are really eating out of the river?**
- **Who is consuming the fish?**
  - This was done by a group of Native students, and in some cases **audio/video taping** was used to find out why they were eating the fish and what they were doing to prepare the fish to be eaten.
- Cassie: was there a **quantitative** component as well?
- Sheryl: Duwamish partnered with **Health Department.**
- Peter: A study was done by an EPA staffer, not through a grant.
  - A lot of info was derived from community, there was no EJ analysis pot of money, money got through tag grant, /NIH grant, there was a small EJ grant and

- there was also a research grant, they partnered with human resources.
- They reached out not only from tribal community but other communities as well.
  - They had to come back with the data. EPA was able to use the information that they were supplied.
- Ibrahim: I know you are interested in how many people are eating the fish, what about the water that people are using, to wash up, that pets use and they have fur fall off.
  - Chip: We are talking about **sediment contamination**
    - **Consumption of fish is greatest risk of health effects, resident fish.**
  - Peter: the specific question of Ibrahim is that the houseless population uses the river for cleaning and other things, and **could the water impact that population?**
  - John: **there are specific health risks in the water**; outfalls from river.
  - Jim: Eric you mentioned something about this, that it isn't rocket science. We can plug community into meetings, so that info is digestible.
    - This type of meeting is the type of meeting we are looking for. this type of meeting is a real good example. This is just what we are looking for.
    - We can't guess that, but you can help us represent different sub factions of community.
  - Cassie: It looks like there will be some good follow up on specific pieces, such as gaps and follow up, if we can track the resources down in time. This was wonderful. Thanks to our guests from EPA, DEQ and Bonamici's office.

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